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Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 9 October 1991, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. SHIHABI (Saudi Arabia)

later: Mr. BAGBENI ADEITO NZENGEYA (Zaire)
(Vice-President)

- General debate [9] (continued)

Statements made by

Mr. Alleyne (Dominica)
Sir Clement Maynard (Bahamas)
Sir Peter Kenilorea (Solomon Islands)

Address by Major-General Elias Phisoana Ramaema, Chairman of the Military Council and Council of Ministers of the Kingdom of Lesotho

Statements made by

Mr. Sahloul (Sudan)
Mr. Simutis (Lithuania)

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. ALLEYNE (Dominica): It is a pleasure and an honour to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at this session. You and your country, Saudi Arabia, have consistently played a significant and responsible role in the affairs of the Organization, and most dramatically in the last 12 months. I express the greatest confidence in your ability to guide us throught these critical times and pledge my country's full cooperation. You will no doubt be inspired and encouraged by the support which the Assembly gave to your predecessor and by the distinguished manner in which he discharged his mandate.

It is a special pleasure, too, for me to welcome to membership of this world body the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea - a cause which my country espoused in this body as long ago as 1984. The membership of these countries further reinforces the international character of the United Nations and will doubtless contribute to the deepening of a constructive dialogue not only between the Koreas themselves but in other areas of dispute as well. We congratulate them, while expressing full solidarity with their efforts towards unification. We also wish to welcome Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia.

This first year of the final decade of the twentieth century continues to be dominated by good news. With few exceptions, the revolutionary changes which are transforming the world's economy and the relationships between nations are taking place in a spirit of cooperation, of mutual respect, of

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hope for a new world order in which the world will see itself as a single, interrelated, interdependent organism in which the responsibility of each nation towards all other nations is given real meaning. Regional integration movements should be perceived as steps towards this objective and should receive the greatest possible support from the international community.

It is within this context that we call upon the parties to the conflicts in the Middle East to seize the unique opportunities offered by the current world context to bring lasting and just peace to that troubled region. The time may never again be as propitious. Confrontational attitudes cannot guarantee, ultimately, lasting security and peace. Only mutual respect between neighbours, the just distribution and utilization of resources, and balanced development can do this. The United Nations as an organization and its Member nations must use whatever influence they have to prevail upon the leadership of the nations and factions in that region to move away from their well-known and advertised preconditions and towards greater openness and trust, even a willingness to take risks, without which progress is not possible.

The world community, not least the third world, must renounce the use of force as a means of resolving regional disputes. This would reduce significantly expenditure on armaments of all kinds and divert the resources released thereby to development.

I pause here to applaud the recent initiative of President Bush towards deepening the nuclear disarmament and to welcome the Soviet Union's largely positive response. Dominica would like to see the good will engendered by these actions lead to further and more rapid progress in disarmament talks.

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Until recently, development has been undertaken without sensitivity to environmental impacts. The resultant pollution and deterioration have impacted not only on those countries which have reaped the benefits of development but on all of us. The resistance of the developing countries to the insistent demands of the industrialized world that we the poor of the world must now carry the burden of environmental protection is both rational and understandable.

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The protection of the environment in the interests of the whole world cannot be at the expense of the development prospects of the poor of the underdeveloped regions of the South while the people of the developed North enjoy to the full, and exclusively, the benefits reaped from the almost total depletion of the natural resources of their regions, which took place over the last two centuries but which has had a tremendous, deleterious effect on the entire world. The peoples of the industrialized countries must, in justice, not only work for a halt to environmental deterioration but also assist in very concrete ways in bringing the peoples of the developing world into a fair share of the benefits of development.

The matter of third-world development is closely related to the matter of human rights, another legitimate concern of the international community. We are very pleased to see the remarkable growth in respect for human rights and democratic practices that has characterized the past decade both in Eastern Europe and in our own hemisphere of the Americas. We emphasize, however, that this search for democracy cannot be sustained, far less triumph, unless it is accompanied by economic advances and improvements in the social conditions of the peoples of those countries. The agencies of the United Nations and the world community in general need to be more sensitive to the development needs of the developing countries, and more especially to the need for development of human resources through education, training and the transfer of technology. But the urgent and basic human needs of the world's poor demand immediate attention.

That brings me to the tragedy of Haiti, a country which, after a proud start as the world's first black republic almost 200 years ago, and after

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decades of the harshest imaginable repression under the Duvalier dictatorship, was beginning to see the light of a new day of hope. President Aristide had been installed after the first free, fair and open election that country had experienced. The economy remained in a shambles, with no realistic expectation of early prosperity, but at least with a commitment on the part of the President to work assiduously towards taking his country "from misery to poverty" as an immediate goal. The democratically elected Government forswore privilege and prestige and identified with the plight of the people, with the rule of law, and with respect for human rights.

All hope was dashed on 30 September 1991 with the news of the bloody military coup and the arrest and exile of President Aristide. We thank God that at least his life was spared, and we pay a tribute to the Ambassador of France in Haiti for his courage, and to the Ambassadors of the United States and Venezuela for their intervention in that respect.

The violent and illegal interruption of the democratic process in that sister Caribbean republic cannot be tolerated. At this time when democracy is being expanded and consolidated in the hemisphere, and after we have successfully resisted and prevailed over similar acts in Trinidad and Tobago and Grenada within the Caribbean, such a reversal is wholly unacceptable. The Organization of American States has undertaken very firm action in response to these events, action which has the full backing of Dominica, and I call on the United Nations and its Member States to join with the countries of this hemisphere in isolating the illegal régime in control of Haiti, diplomatically, economically and commercially, and in taking such other action as may be necessary to bring an end to that illegal régime and to reinstate

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President Aristide to his legitimate authority as the duly and democratically elected head of that Caribbean republic.

President Aristide has called on his people to have confidence in the international community. Let us honour that call and not betray the confidence of the people of Haiti. Let us, with General Colin Powell, Chairman of the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff, let incipient military dictators know that democracy demands that military professionals must "subordinate themselves totally to the will of the people and their elected representatives".

Developments in South Africa give cause for cautious optimism. We shall continue to monitor the situation and to respond to developments as appears to us appropriate. In the meantime, Dominica maintains economic sanctions against the minority regime in that country while applying flexibility in other areas such as cricket, where we have backed the re-entry of South Africa into international competition. We look forward to the day when South Africa, under a democratically elected Government, can take its full and rightful place in the international community.

We are thankful that the prevalence of international terrorism which so characterized our world only one year ago has to a great extent retreated. We cannot, however, afford complacency. Terrorism is a scourge on the world community and cannot be justified on any grounds. Until it is eradicated altogether and all the hostages, who are among the greatest victims of terrorism, have been released, the commitment of the international community to fight the scourge must be sustained.

No less dangerous, and certainly not in retreat, is the problem of the international traffic in narcotic drugs. This problem continues to plague the

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world, not least the Caribbean and American regions. The effectiveness of coordination between nations, especially in interdiction and in forfeiture of the proceeds of the trade, must be enhanced if we are to enjoy success in our efforts. The principal attraction of the trade is the incredible profit wich it brings to those who participate in it, and we shall not realize real success until we succeed in making the risks inherent in the trade greater than the financial attractions attendant on it.

As with most commodities in international trade, it is not the producers of the raw materials who reap the benefits of the trade. Thus, the peasants who grow coca, opium poppies or marijuana receive less than 1 per cent of the street value of the final product. It is not beyond the ability of the international community to so stabilize the price for the narrow band of commodities on which most developing countries depend as to make it more attractive for peasants to grow such traditional export crops as coffee, cocoa, bananas than to grow marijuana, coca or opium poppies.

We in the Caribbean are particularly vulnerable and must work ever more closely with our neighbours in this struggle for survival. In this context, our neighbours are, most immediately, the countries of the Caribbean, Latin America and North America, including France with its Caribbean Departments. However, in the broader context of development, Dominica views the entire world as its neighbour and emphasizes the critical importance of interdependence, cooperation and policy coordination in the interests of world peace, stability, security and development. The principal task of the United Nations in the last decade of the twentieth century must be to undertake the coordination of the integral development of all nations, the elimination of

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the fundamental causes of conflict - primarily exploitation, mistrust and underdevelopment - and the universal adoption of a new concern for international equity, which, as far as Dominica is concerned at this moment, must start with an adequate régime within the European single market to come into effect in 1993 to protect the vital interests of the small banana-producing economies of the Windward Islands, in which endeavour our neighbours in Central and South America must recognize a responsibility.

Sir Clement MAYNARD (Bahamas): I am happy to congratulate you warmly, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session. The Bahamas is confident that, given your vast experience and diplomatic skills, you will lead this session to a successful conclusion.

I take this opportunity to express deep appreciation to your predecessor, Mr. Guido de Marco, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Malta, for the excellent manner in which he presided over our deliberations at the forty-fifth session.

Our Secretary-General has given much to our Organization and we owe much of our success in the past year to his wise leadership. The Bahamas wishes to record its appreciation for his untiring efforts as a champion of peace. As he demits this high office, the Bahamas wishes to pay the highest tribute to this great son of our Latin American and Caribbean region for his enormous contribution to this Organization. Among his greatest legacies will be his dedication to fostering the social and economic development of developing countries - a noble legacy indeed.

I wish also, on behalf of the Government and the people of the Bahamas, to welcome the Republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, North and South Korea, the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands to membership in the United Nations.

Only two weeks ago the first democratically elected President of Haiti, the Reverend Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide, proudly addressed this Assembly. He, and indeed all of us, held great expectations then that Haiti had finally closed the door on its political past and stood poised in the sunlight of democracy, ready to challenge the international community to live up to its

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promises and obligations to render real economic support to the fledgling Haitian democratic Government, without which it could not survive.

Today I am forced to join the world community in condemning the betrayal of Haitian democratic ideals by the military. This latest attempt to wrest power from the duly elected and constitutional Government of Haiti is particularly bitter to those of the region who played so intimate a part in the realization of Haitian democratic elections less than one year ago and who witnessed the inauguration of President Aristide in February of this year. We call on those who have seized power in Port-au-Prince to recant and immediately restore constitutional order to the Republic, to bring those responsible for the loss of life to justice and to allow Haiti to continue on its path to genuine growth and development. We call for international solidarity in the pursuit of this goal and we urge speedy action to end the suffering of the Haitian people.

The decade of the 1990s has already proved to be one of tremendous revolution, as evidenced by dramatic changes in the international political landscape. At no time in history has there been a more widespread quest for freedom and democracy. Consistent demands and pressure to dismantle apartheid have set the wheels of change in motion in South Africa. The proud people of Namibia celebrate the first anniversary of nationhood and the German people a year of reunification as the aspirations of the peoples of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania to independence have been realized.

We also welcome the success of the United Nations-sponsored peace initiative in El Salvador and we hope that the parties will observe the letter and the spirit of the agreement so that the people of El Salvador can enjoy the benefits of peaceful development.

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Although at tremendous cost, international action repelled aggression in the Persian Gulf and upheld the basic tenets of the Charter of the United Nations. Today the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of Kuwait are preserved.

We welcome the initiatives currently under way to bring all States involved in the question of the Middle East to the negotiating table. We reiterate our support for an international peace conference to address the right of all States to exist within secure and recognized boundaries, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

We commend the Governments of Belize and the Republic of Guatemala on their negotiations, which have now resulted in the establishment of full diplomatic relations. We welcome this development, fully cognizant of the tremendous potential for enhancing the peace and security of the region.

These dramatic developments on the international political front have opened new economic opportunities and challenges for the global economy. It is particularly urgent now that countries with weak economies be granted a fair opportunity to participate in the benefits to be derived from new trade and investment initiatives.

It will be recalled that during the last session of the Assembly I announced that the Bahamas had introduced a new investment programme designed to encourage the flow of foreign investment capital. I am pleased to inform the Assembly that new legislation is soon to be completed:

"An Act to encourage the establishment, conduct and expansion of enterprises and investment in designated areas of the islands of the Bahamas by the granting of certain exemptions and fiscal incentives to persons engaging in such enterprises or investment".

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This kind of economic initiative is particularly important to the development of the Bahamas and the economic advancement of its people.

The Bahamas remains deeply concerned over its lack of access to international resources on a concessionary basis and its exclusion from official development assistance. Therefore the Bahamas welcomes the Enterprise of the Americas Initiative, whose proposals on the management of external debt, investment promotion, trade liberalization and the environment are critical to the development of countries in the region. We would encourage other developed countries to undertake similar initiatives and to make benefits available on as wide a basis as possible, including all countries in the region. The Bahamas hopes that the necessary resources required to render the American Initiative effective are put in place in a timely fashion so that the gains might stimulate new, important economic activity in participatory States.

The Bahamas regrets that the last round of negotiations of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) did not achieve global agreement, and we hope that the process will be given a further opportunity so that the trade concerns of all countries, especially the developing countries, can be addressed towards the enhancement of international trade relations.

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The international drug trade has generated social, economic and political problems of such magnitude that the global community is obliged to continue investing vast efforts and resources in combating it.

It is evident that a well coordinated and properly financed plan, supported by the commitment of Governments, is required if international efforts against the drug menace are to be successful. The Bahamas has therefore enthusiastically supported the increased emphasis on galvanizing the framework for international cooperation in drug control in recent years, resulting in the establishment of the United Nations narcotic drugs Global Programme of Action. The efficacy of the Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies (HONLEA) system is evident. The international drug control treaty regime is now more complete following the adoption of the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, and significant blueprints for drug control generated the very important Global Programme of Action.

We are confident that the international community will build on this new foundation to the fullest extent. The Bahamas can be counted upon to play its role at the international, regional and bilateral levels, and we hope that the success which we have achieved through cooperative efforts will be an example to others. We would be happy to share our experience with other Member States.

As an archipelagic State, whose principal industries are tourism and fisheries, we have among our highest priorities the preservation and protection of the environment and the maintenance of a sound ecosystem. We endorse the development of a multilateral approach to the protection of the environment which will recognize the needs and concerns of all countries for sustainable development. To this end, we look forward to the 1992 Conference on Environment and Development and the adoption of international conventions

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on biodiversity and climate change. My Government wishes to acknowledge the assistance extended by the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Development Programme and the donor community to enable developing countries to participate in the preparatory process for the Conference. We hope that contributions will continue so as to allow for developing countries to be adequately represented at the Conference itself.

Regrettably, the most appropriate forum for global action again finds itself severely handicapped by its financial situation. States must resolve to give the United Nations the financial resources it needs.

When my country entered the international family of nations 18 years ago my Government made a commitment to respect the basic principles of international law and the Charter of this Organization. We noted then that we entertained no illusions of grandeur about the potential of small States like the Bahamas to influence world affairs. We remain committed, however, to enhancing the work of the United Nations and its potential greatness and influence. We call on all Member States to do likewise.

In 1992 the Bahamas will commemorate the quincentennial anniversary of the encounter of two worlds, which is an inescapable part of our history. By virtue of the first landfall of Columbus in the new world at San Salvador, the Bahamas became the first known part of the new world, a historic fact in which Bahamians take a great deal of pride. The first event of our official calendar took place recently with the arrival of the Japanese reproduction of Columbus's flagship, the "Santa Maria", at San Salvador. This visit, to be followed by a year-long programme of activities, including exchanges in the Bahamas involving countries from every region of the world, will highlight the importance of strength and diversity of the cultures of the world. The

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Bahamas is particularly pleased that so many States have agreed to participate so that we may place the last 500 years in their proper perspective.

Peace and security are of the utmost importance to human development and advancement. They are also important to the improvement of economic stability and the arrest of stagnation and recession.

The elusive economic recovery, which has occupied so much time and discussion over the last year and a half, recovery from which benefits would flow to developing countries, seems to defy the prognostications of the sages. An atmosphere of fear, sabre-rattling and uncertainty will not promote the economic conditions we all long for and require to allay the problems which beset our countries. We pray for and work towards the promise of favourable times.

The great English novelist Charles Dickens, writing in 1859 of a Europe faced with the challenges of industrial and political revolution in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, entered into literary immortality the lines:

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times - it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness". (A Tale of Two Cities)

To paraphrase Thomas Paine, it was indeed a time that tried men's souls.

Tumultuous times are once again upon us, and, as they were 200 years ago, they are again centred in Europe. As then, the tremors of Europe's tumult are felt in the Americas, in Africa and in Asia. But troubled times are always times of great opportunity, as Dickens recognized all those years ago. We must look at these times as seasons of light and springs of hope.

Sir Peter KENILOREA (Solomon Islands): Mr. President, allow me to begin by warmly congratulating you on your election to preside over this forty-sixth session of the United Nations General Assembly. Your elevation to this high office is a demonstration of the confidence which this body has in you as its President. I look forward to working closely with you during your term in office and to a rewarding United Nations General Assembly session under your esteemed leadership. I should also like to express our admiration for the distinguished service rendered by your predecessor, Mr. Guido de Marco of Malta.

It is a privilege and honour to stand before this Assembly and address the nations of the world. My message, which has been the consistent theme of past speeches delivered by leaders of the Solomon Islands privileged to speak from this famous rostrum, has been one advocating peace in the world because Solomon Islands believes that this is what the United Nations stands for: "peace in the world, and good will among men". Peace is the source of bountiful goodness from which will come true prosperity and balanced development in the world.

Peace and freedom for that matter cannot be found in statistics or mathematical equations, nor is it a matter for scientific investigation. It is rather a matter of attitude and belief - a behaviour pattern governed by the mind and from the mind. President Gorbachev of the Soviet Union links world peace and reforms in his own country. The 1990 Nobel Peace Prize winner claims that

> "if perestroika fails, the prospect of entering a new peaceful period in history will vanish, at least for the foreseeable future".

Solomon Islands joins other nations in congratulating President Gorbachev and the people of the Soviet Union on their bravery and courage despite

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confusion and the threat of disintegration brought about by the coup attempt last August. Solomon Islands views with interest and concern the wave of changes that are taking place in Eastern Europe. It welcomes the move towards democratization that is taking place in the Soviet Union to allow the Baltic Republics to decide their own destinies. It is our hope that, with the process of democratization already spearheaded by the Soviet Union, the industrialized countries of the West will work together to bring about similar changes in Eastern Europe and other nations of the globe that have aspired to similar reforms.

Small countries such as Solomon Islands which aspires to better the living environment of its people in the context of international development would therefore ask for understanding and assistance to help us live and develop the way we ourselves want to live and develop and not as others would want us to live.

This is of course quite contrary to certain current beliefs and practices in a number of Pacific Islands today. We, the people of the Pacific, would strive to live harmoniously together and not to see the people in some of our islands struggling to live the way others expect us to live. The freedom to live and govern ourselves is the greatest aspiration of our people. What we in small countries ask for is the right to believe in ourselves; the right to make up our own minds; and the right to practise what we believe. These surely are our sovereign rights. We are in the United Nations because we believe in peaceful coexistence and we pledge to play our part in whatever small way we can to assist in the realization of true peace and harmony in the world.

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Sometimes it appears that selfishness has overruled godliness and I feel it behoves small countries like Solomon Islands to point that out to the world. I believe it is the duty and function of small countries to do this as bigger nations at times seem to get blinded and tangled up in problems of their own design and making.

We have recently seen in the Gulf war the most swiftly executed military victory, on this scale, in history. The United Nations played an important role in that victory and continues today to play a leading peace-keeping role in the aftermath of that war.

May I humbly suggest, however, that this world will not see the last of military warfare and confrontation of this nature as long as wealthy countries continue to manufacture and sell weapons of destruction around the globe, proliferating what the Prime Minister of Norway in her speech to this Assembly two weeks ago called on "arms culture" in the world.

Within some false notion of greatness and economic well-being, some countries continue to manufacture and sell destructive weapons harmful to mankind. By doing this they are in fact abusing their God-given talents in searching for destructive weapons rather than for peaceful ends, yet they pride themselves in the achievement of these destructive powers at the price of human life.

Ironically they justify this abuse of human talent and knowledge as being necessary for man's survival. Some would indeed argue that it is necessary for the protection of freedom that democratic nations should at least keep abreast of the developments in the manufacture of effective deadly weapons so as to be in a state of vigilant preparedness.

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Personally, I would rather stand by the Word of the Lord and say: "they that take the sword shall perish with the sword". (The Holy Bible, Matthew 26:52)

So he who believes in nuclear bombs and nuclear weapons will be destroyed by them.

The end of the cold war between the super-Powers should in itself be a timely reminder and a clear message to the rest of the world about the fallacy of relying on the power of atomic bombs and nuclear weapons as instruments of peace.

The recent successful efforts by the United States and the Soviet Union towards disarmament and weapons reduction are praiseworthy. Mr. Bush deserves the highest commendation of this world body for his leadership in the bold steps he unilaterally took recently in cutting down United States nuclear arsenals of destruction, as does the refreshing and encouraging positive response from Mr. Gorbachev and the Soviet Union during the last few days. The world greeted such good news as bringing fresh hopes of peace, only to be stunned at the knowledge of the apparent ability of certain countries to enrich the uranium supply for the manufacture of nuclear bombs, and to cast doubts once more on the future of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the possibility of halting the spread of atomic weapons in the world.

Be that as it may, Solomon Islands would still say that all nations should by now have signed the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. If France and China can now commit themselves to becoming parties to the Treaty, why not the rest of us for the sake of world peace?

In the field of environment and environmental control, which has emerged in the past few years as a subject of special interest capturing world-wide

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attention at this time (albeit perhaps a little too late in some parts of the world), developing countries are taking stock of the damage done to their natural habitat in the indiscriminate exploitation of their land and sea resources by unscrupulous foreign business interests seeking quick fortunes in logging, mining and fishing ventures.

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In the South Pacific, our seas have been plundered unmercifully with huge purse-seines and ugly drift-nets that scoop up every living sea - and sometimes land - creature in their paths, discarding in their wake tangled masses of net-meshing, which have become known as "walls of death", trapping all fish and mammal species to death. Our hills and valleys have become denuded of forest trees and foliage, with no attempt by the "exploiters" in most cases at re-afforestation in the aftermath to replenish nature's handiwork.

In many instances, we who live in the developing countries are blamed for the destruction of our environment and have been harassed about the need not to pollute our seas and air, when it is well known that it is the industrialized countries that are mainly responsible for the destruction of the environment.

In a "business-as-usual world" - a concept harboured and jealously protected by one or two of the most industrialized nations for political and economic reasons - global warming and greenhouse gas emissions of carbon dioxide and other gases into the atmosphere continue at rates unprecedented in human history. And, alas, it is now well established in scientific research circles that it is we, the inhabitants of the island countries of the Pacific, Caribbean and Indian Oceans and our children of the future, who live four feet above the sea-water level, who will first disappear from the face of the Earth in the event of sea-level rise in four or five generations hence.

The trend shows that man is no longer part of nature, in which he could feel and live harmoniously in a natural environment with the flowers, birds and animals. The anarchist tendency in man has risen above his natural self so that he forgets who he really is, destroying his environment and eventually

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himself. The burning oilfields of Kuwait continue to tell us the sad tale, spewing black smoke and poisonous gases into the atmosphere for years to come.

The island countries of the Pacific, in particular, are looking forward to a successful outcome of the forthcoming United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, to be held in Brazil in June 1992, and hope: (a) that the proposed Agenda 21, a wide-ranging instrument containing objectives, activities and measures of implementation for specific action proposals, will be agreed upon by all Member States, and will serve as a binding agenda, reflecting a political commitment of all Member States to achieve sustainable development, both nationally and internationally; (b) that all Member States agree to the proposed Earth/Rio Charter, which should declare the general principles by which governments and peoples should conduct themselves in relation to each other and to the environment and ensure our common future in both environmental and developmental terms; (c) that an effective framework Convention on Climate Change will be achieved, containing appropriate commitments and addressing all sources of the problem, including sea-level rise and greenhous gases; and (d) that there will be agreement on the principles for the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests, leading also to another related framework convention.

In this regard, the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) at the United Nations has already been playing an active role and has made notable inputs in the negotiations during the First and Second International Negotiating Committee meetings, held, respectively, in Washington, D.C. in February 1991 and in Geneva in June 1991, and again in Nairobi during the third meeting that ended last week. Future sessions will be held in Geneva and possibly in New York at later dates. At the same time, small island States have actively

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participated in the previous sessions of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and will continue to do so at its fourth and final Preparatory Committee meeting next March and at the Rio Earth Summit in June 1992.

With such a background scenario of the world we live in, one wonders about the meaning of a "new world order" as advanced by our world leaders and as coined by the President of the United States of America. Mr. Bush gave assurance in this Assembly two weeks ago that his vision of the new order does not include the notion of pax americana. However, as a small country, Solomon Islands is still concerned.

Does it mean a shift of allegiances and control among the bigger Powers of the Earth in a rezoning of our world into new regional spheres of influence, or is it to be a vision of cooperation and common world endeavours, in which all countries, big and small, contribute to peaceful coexistence and harmonious living?

Is it a new order in which the more powerful nations strengthen their stranglehold over others less fortunate so as to dictate and rule through dominance of the latest technologies in military power maintained in strategic areas around the world, where it would be relatively easy for them to jeopardize other initiatives from within that could bring about alternative peaceful lifestyles?

The worst scenario would be a new world order in which military priorities rule over world spending of billions of dollars, while millions of people starve and die from want of food, better housing and living conditions. It is very sad to see human beings in our streets being degraded to homelessness, not necessarily - as it is often said - because of some brain

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injury or sickness; not even because of drugs, since drugs are in many cases the result, not the cause, of the problem. Homelessness is caused by wrong economic orientation and planning, not necessarily social disorder, and certainly not because of a lack of human intelligence.

What will the new world order mean in terms of trade development and economic prosperity in a world climate of today, in which the United States of America sees a free trade zone for the Americas to include Canada, Mexico and eventually countries of South America, while Europe - now to include the new nations of the Eastern bloc - talks of a consolidation of the European Community into one mould, exercizing new freedoms of movement and monetary arrangements hitherto unknown?

What will happen in Asia, with its teeming millions of people, and what role will the adjacent island country of Japan play as the most powerful and economically successful nation in the world today?

And where and how will the small island countries of the Pacific region manage in a world in which the bigger countries appear to be creating exclusive economic and possibly military defensive zones for themselves?

(Sir Peter Kenilorea, Solomon Islands)

Indeed, this very concern touches fundamentally the issue of the protection and security of the world's small States. The United Nations Charter contains many articles which, if effectively implemented, would provide certain reassurances in the safeguarding and security of small States, especially the small island developing countries of the Pacific, Caribbean and Indian oceans.

In particular, Members of the United Nations should facilitate the implementation of Chapter VII - Articles 39 to 51 - of the Charter, designed specifically to deal with the existence of any threat to peace, breach of peace or act of aggression under the mandate of the Security Council. The Secretary-General should play a more active role in the spirit of Article 99, so that in cases of low-level security threats, for example, he could positively respond to requests from small States, feeling themselves to be under some threat from other States, by immediately sending missions or alternatively officials of the United Nations Secretariat to assess the situations in those countries. Such action would indeed give the United Nations a peace-making as well as a peace-keeping role.

At a workshop on the protection and security of small States, sponsored by the Commonwealth Secretariat and held in the Maldives from 5 to 6 May 1991, it was recommended that serious consideration be given to the establishment of either a permanent or an ad hoc United Nations force that could be activated under Chapter VII of the Charter for international security needs. It was also suggested at the meeting that a United Nations force of a rapid-response nature, under the direct contol of the Secretary-General, be established to meet, on request, the security needs of small States. The activation of such

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a force could be at the initiative of the Secretary-General in consultation with the Security Council.

President Bush proposed at last year's General Assembly that the United Nations strengthen its ability to respond positively to requests from Member countries by providing electoral assistance, which up to now has been done on an ad hoc basis, as in the cases of Nicaragua and Haiti. Solomon Islands strongly supports the United States President's proposal and at the same time would ask that similar consideration and commitment be given by the United Nations to the protection and security of small States in line with what I have just outlined.

After all, it is likely that more countries would be seeking assistance for protection and security than would need electoral assistance. Furthermore, since last year's resolution 45/150 was adopted by the General Assembly, it would be quite in order this year to formulate a resolution to accommodate such sentiments as I have outlined on the issue of the protection and security of small States. Solomon Islands is determined to work with the Republic of Maldives in formulating such a resolution, which we believe will have universal acceptance in this world body. It is most encouraging to read the Secretary-General's report, which recognized the intrinsic characteristics of these small States needing special measures for attention and support and which pointed out that the international community has a vested interest in safeguarding their interests. Small States certainly have a limited capacity to provide for their own security. Such a resolution would be complementary to the resolution suggested by Japan on the establishment of a United Nations

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reporting system to enhance the transparency of international dealings in arms-transfers and world-wide security issues.

Finally, in the South Pacific region, life remains ostensibly the same when seen from afar - comparatively simple, peaceful and calm. Yet perhaps this is why we should be more concerned, because it could mean we are going backwards rather than forwards, since nothing can remain static in this world. The twenty-second South Pacific Forum Communiqué issued after the Pohnpei meeting in the Federated States of Micronesia held on 29 to 30 July 1991, reiterated the main concerns of the region to be: economic development and trade prospects; environment with special emphasis on sea-level rise; security as it would affect the whole region; decolonization; and the region's approach to global issues. I have to a certain extent already elaborated on aspects of these same issues earlier in my statement.

Our people continue, for example, to be concerned greatly over the practice of driftnet fishing and dismayed by the French bomb tests in our waters. These grievances are as great today as they were yesterday and in yesteryears. We are therefore heartened to learn of attempts in the United States Congress - both in the Senate and the House of Representatives - to legally outlaw driftnetting, which has become regarded as the scourge of our seas in the Pacific.

We are happy that, in our part of the world, the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea were recommended for membership by the Security Council in its resolution 702 (1991) and consequently admitted by this Assembly in the early part of this session as full Members of the United Nations. Solomon Islands is confident that this world body will in the near

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future see a reunification of these two nations as one democratically governed nation, since they are in fact one people.

Solomon Islands also welcomes the admission of the Baltic Republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to membership of the United Nations. We look forward to working closely with the new States as they take their rightful places amongst all nations represented here.

We are delighted at the same time to welcome the admission of our neighbouring Pacific Island countries of the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands as full Members of the United Nations. It strengthens our faith in the United Nations as being truly concerned with the wishes of people in the world who genuinely desire independence and the opportunity to govern themselves. Solomon Islands looks forward to working closely with our brothers and sisters of these two young nations both here at the United Nations and in our region at home in the Pacific.

On the other hand, we continue to be greatly disappointed with France for its nuclear-testing programme in the Pacific. We therefore once again call on France to put an end to this programme. Moreover the recent "knighting" of the Rainbow Warrior saboteur Alain Mafart, while at the same time appearing to be saluting his award with another bomb blast at Mururoa Atoll, is a crowning act of selfish defiance and belittling by France of the South Pacific nations' concern for their environment and legitimate rights of livelihood.

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Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, in answer to a question from the audience while delivering a lecture at the Economic Club of New York held at the Empire State Building on 19 June of this year, said: "the French have protective tendencies". Our experience of the French colonial attitude in the South Pacific as demonstrated in New Caledonia has taught us people of the region that this is very true, and we regret very much that, as history reveals, all the good and admirable French flavour and lifestyle are likely in the end to be lost in our region because of this attitude, as has happened elsewhere in other parts of the world.

On the question of independence for New Caledonia, Solomon Islands was proud to be a member of the Ministerial Mission mandated by the South Pacific Forum to visit the Territory. We are grateful for the cooperation received from the French Government and the interested groups within the Territory during the Mission's deliberations.

The report of that Ministerial Mission, which I hope will be distributed to this body soon, highlights positive steps taken by France in implementation of the Matignon Accord, in particular its cooperation with all sectors of the population to promote equitable socio-political and economic development in the Territory. Solomon Islands sees these measures as a move in the right direction and encourages France to continue discussion with all the parties involved in New Caledonia in preparation for an act of self-determination consistent with the United Nations principles and practices, in which all options, including independence, would be open, and which would safeguard the rights of the indigenous Kanak and other New Caledonians.

(Sir Peter Kenilorea, Solomon Islands)

Solomon Islands would like to see greater interaction between New Caledonia and the independent countries of the South Pacific. It supports the call by the South Pacific Forum for increasing contacts and for participation by New Caledonia and other French Pacific Territories in the Forum-initiated advisory committees, meetings, seminars and workshops.

The Solomon Islands Government welcomes the positive developments within South Africa. We look forward to the time when the phenomenon of apartheid will truly be extinct and a united, non-racial South Africa will be accepted into this community of nations. However, while we commend President De Klerk for the steps he has taken to dismantle apartheid, black South Africans continue to be deprived of their rights, their freedom and their lives. My Government reiterates its full support for the maintenance of comprehensive sanctions against South Africa until there is clear evidence of profound and irreversible change in South Africa.

Solomon Islands welcomes the new developments in the attempts to achieve a comprehensive political settlement of the Cambodian problem. We urge all parties concerned to cooperate in reaching as quickly as possible a resolution of that conflict.

As the term of office of the Secretary-General will soon come to an end, I should like to pay a tribute on behalf of the Government and people of Solomon Islands to this eminent person. Mr. Perez de Cuellar's long association with this Organization in various capacities is well known, and his leadership in his present capacity has been outstanding and deserves the highest praise of the Assembly. Mr. Perez de Cuellar came as the Secretary-General at a time when the challenges facing the United Nations were

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immense. The accomplishments during his term in office, including the adoption of a plan for the termination of the Iran-Iraq war, the conclusion of the Geneva Agreements, the withdrawal of Soviet Union forces from Afghanistan, and the bringing of independence to Namibia, demonstrate Mr. Perez de Cuellar's outstanding diplomatic skills and able leadership. He will be leaving behind a world body more optimistic about its role and more hopeful for world peace. May I wish him great successes in the future.

I should like to conclude by emphasizing that all Member countries here at the United Nations, big or small, are admitted as equal partners in an endeavour to preserve and protect all that is good for our people of the world - as our Charter reminds us:

> "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war ... and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person" - and the right of freedom for all mankind.

The United Nations of the 1990s has shown its coming of age in fulfilling certain obligations of the Charter, as with the recent developments in the Middle East crisis. Member countries appear to have regained their sense of balance in favour of shared interest in promoting the well-being of the peoples of the world. Adversaries of the recent past have found the humility and strength to put aside their differences in favour of acting and speaking together for the general good of mankind.

Today the spirit of glasnost and transparency has opened the door for optimism about the future of mankind. I pray that this world body does not miss this opportunity to build a world community which will be the pride of nations and our children of the future.

ADDRESS BY MAJOR-GENERAL ELIAS PHISOANA RAMAEMA, CHAIRMAN OF THE MILITARY COUNCIL AND COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF THE KINGDOM OF LESOTHO

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Chairman of the Military Council and Council of Ministers of the Kingdom of Lesotho.

Major-General Elias Phisoana Ramaema, Chairman of the Military Council and Council of Ministers of the Kingdom of Lesotho, was escorted to the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): I have great pleasure in welcoming the Chairman of the Military Council and Council of Ministers of the Kingdom of Lesotho, Major-General Elias Phisoana Ramaema, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. RAMAEMA (Lesotho): This year the General Assembly holds its forty-sixth session in a world that has undergone a historic transformation. Various events that have occurred since the last session of the Assembly have generated in humanity a new atmosphere of hope for the United Nations, which, to be sustained, will require equally momentous decisions by our Organization to create a better world for mankind.

(Mr. Ramaema, Lesotho)

I take singular pleasure in welcoming the seven new Member States to our family of nations. Their presence among us will enrich our Organization and lend credence to the universality of the United Nations.

The emerging new world order will remain on a shaky pedestal as long as the task of reducing the world's arsenals of war and mass destruction - a vestige of the cold war - remains the exclusive responsibility of the super-Powers and not the universal concern of the international community as a whole. We need a new strategy for disarmament, one which would involve global negotiations on the balanced reduction of all categories of arms, including conventional armaments.

We view as another positive measure requiring urgent international support and encouragement the proposal for the early establishment of an international register of arms sales under the aegis of the United Nations.

The Government of the United States deserves our congratulations for carrying a step forward the ongoing process of gradual super-Power disarmament through a bold programme of unilateral measures, announced recently by President Bush. We equally applaud the reciprocal positive response thereto by President Mikhael Gorbachev. We hope that this move will add new impetus to the international efforts to create a world that is free of weapons of mass destruction.

Although the end of the cold war has opened up new horizons for world stability and cooperation and diminished the dangers of global conflagration, situations flowing from the old era still remain which, if met with complacency, will continue to threaten peace and security and to undermine the universal character of the new world order.

(Mr. Ramaema, Lesotho)

As we cast our eyes towards Asia, we see in Cambodia a country that has suffered a decade of vicious fighting and the frustration of stalled peace talks. We welcome and encourage the peace initiatives of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN). We applaud the United Nations framework document of 1990 which was endorsed by the Security Council in its resolution 668 (1990). It is our belief that a solid foundation has now been laid for the holding of United Nations supervised elections scheduled for next year which will, it is hoped, definitively contribute to a comprehensive and lasting solution to the Cambodian problem.

Events in the Middle East continue to highlight the urgency of the early convening of the peace conference on the Middle East. The world is eagerly awaiting the moment when the people of the Middle East - Arabs and Israelis alike - will join the rest of mankind in building a new world order based on reconciliation, tolerance, cooperation and security for all.

Lesotho fully supports the peace initiatives that are being pioneered by the United States, which appear to have won the backing of all the Arab States in the region. We call on the State of Israel to be part of this process of peace and reconciliation.

The developments in Lebanon and Western Sahara have raised some hope that the restoration of peace and stability is within reach, thanks to the patient and untiring efforts of the Secretary-General, Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar, and of the Organization of African Unity. We hope that similar success will be realized in Liberia and in the Horn of Africa in the near future.

Our region in southern Africa has not lived in isolation from the current international climate of peace and reconciliation. Diplomatic efforts in

(Mr. Ramaema, Lesotho)

Angola and Mozambique, however tenuous, have made breakthroughs that put the people of these sister countries on a firm path towards peace, stability and national reconciliation.

We remain concerned, however, at the unpredictable and volatile situation in South Africa. The uncertainty generated by the continuing widespread violence has been compounded by the faltering progress towards negotiating a constitution for a truly democratic South Africa. Although the legal bedrock of apartheid has been smashed through the repeal of a series of discriminatory laws, substantive obstacles remain in the way of making the end of apartheid a tangible reality for the people of South Africa. It is only when a constitutional framework is arrived at, giving full voting rights to the majority population in South Africa on the basis of one-man, one-vote in a unitary nation State, that the world and the people of South Africa will regard apartheid as dead and buried.

We urge all the relevant parties in South Africa, in particular President De Klerk and the leadership of the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC), the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC) and other political formations, to regain the momentum of the initiatives set in motion since February 1990 and to live up to the responsibilities of their historic mission for the future of South Africa.

The new world order of peace and cooperation carries with it not only new opportunities but also newly defined responsibilities and obligations for the international community. It entails a new agenda and a collectively held vision which we must consciously consolidate in order to make its aims and values universal.

(Mr. Ramaema, Lesotho)

We believe that the new world order must be one that gives equal opportunity and security and that protects the legitimate interests of all States, irrespective of size or ethnic identity. It must be based on universal respect for the rights and freedoms of all individuals and be positively disposed towards a just distribution of the benefits of civilization.

A global consensus has already emerged on the merits of popular participation in economic and political decision-making as a starting point for world stability and a foundation for a prosperous world free from national and regional conflicts.

Many nations - especially those in Eastern and Central Europe and in Africa - are today marching on the road to democracy. This is an experiment of momemtous significance that requires due support of and nurturing by the United Nations.

Our Organization has always recognized the right of peoples to self-determination. Thus, for democracy to take root it is imperative that it should not be a coercive prescription from outside, but a culmination of a people's free will from within.

Central to the success of democracy in those of our countries with party-political pluralism is the question of a free and fair election. The United Nations, by virtue of its prestige and neutrality, is uniquely placed to assist electoral processes in emerging democracies through activities ranging from observance of the elections to the provision of technical assistance. Accordingly, my delegation fully subscribes to General Assembly resolution 45/150, adopted at the last session, entitled, "Enhancing the effectiveness of the principle of periodic and genuine elections."

(Mr. Ramaema, Lesotho)

I wish to take this opportunity to inform the Assembly that preparations are advanced for the holding of democratic elections and the return to civilian rule in Lesotho during 1992.

The recent bloody coup in Haiti culminating in the overthrow of a democratically elected Government is a dangerous precedent for the survival of emerging democracies. The United Nations is in duty bound to act and stand firmly in opposing this and similar threats to democratic order and constitutional legitimacy.

It is our hope that under the new world order the norm of popular participation and democracy will include an international dimension that will promote the need to build an international economic and political system that is also democratic.

We would, in particular, like to see more meaningful and fruitful contacts between the developed and developing countries to redress the current imbalances in the world economic order.

The various initiatives already taken to alleviate the burden of external debt and debt-servicing for developing countries have to date yielded negligible results. We hope that the ongoing dialogue within the Paris Club and other forums will result in more imaginative and action-oriented strategies to salvage the situation.

The final review and appraisal of the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990, carried out here at United Nations Headquarters in early September, clearly demonstrated that the Programme had very little positive impact on Africa's economic performance. It failed to rally the expected international support for Africa's reform efforts.

(Mr. Ramaema, Lesotho)

It is imperative that both the African countries and the international community demonstrate a serious commitment to the new, successor arrangement. Its success will depend greatly on enhanced donor-community support for Africa.

Today the issue of the environment is at the centre of the agenda for the future of mankind. We are confident that the forthcoming World Conference on Environment and Development will result in a consensus on strategies for collective international action on the future protection and preservation of the world's environment.

In conclusion, allow me to pay a tribute to our Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar. Under his stewardship during the past 10 years our Organization has been able to lead mankind across the threshold of the new world order. He will forever be remembered in the annals of the history of the United Nations.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): On behalf of the General Assembly I wish to thank the Chairman of the Military Council and Council of Ministers of the Kingdom of Lesotho for the statement he has just made.

Major General Elias Phisoana Ramaema, Chairman of the Military Council and Council of Ministers of the Kingdom of Lesotho, was escorted from the rostrum.

Mr. SAHLOUL (Sudan) (interpretation from Arabic): It is my pleasure to convey to you, Mr. President, on my own behalf and on that of my Government, our warm congratulations on your election to preside over the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly, which brings us together to discuss all international and regional issues that are of concern to all the international community. You, Sir, are a highly experienced diplomat who has

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served the Organization for many years. We have known you as a friend to all and as a brother from a fraternal country to which we are bound by ties of blood and the Islamic religion as well as by a common culture.*

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* Mr. Bagbeni Abeito Nzengeya (Zaire), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Sahloul, Sudan)

Above all, we have known you to be a courageous and experienced diplomat in dealing with many of the intractable questions addressed by the Organization over the years. We congratulate you on your accession to this high post and we have full confidence that you will conduct the deliberations of this session in an exemplary manner.

I also wish to express the deep appreciation of my delegation to your predecessor, Ambassador Guido de Marco, the Foreign Minister of Malta, who conducted the affairs of the last session with wisdom and efficiency.

We also renew our thanks to Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, for his outstanding efforts in consolidating the foundations of international peace and security in a difficult year that witnessed the eruption of thorny problems which threatened to undermine international and regional peace and security.

It is also my pleasure to express the happiness of my delegation at the accession to the membership of the United Nations by the Republic of Korea and the People's Democratic Republic of Korea. We hope that this positive tendency will lead to further efforts to unify peacefully and through negotiations the two Koreas with a view to achieving stability, security and prosperity in the region.

We also express our happiness at the accession to the membership of the United Nations by the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia and the three Baltic Republics of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania. We are confident that with the accession of this group of friendly nations, the Charter of the United Nations is entering nowadays upon a new era and is being rejuvenated. The events in East Europe have highlighted the sanctity of two of the principal foundations of the United Nations Charter, namely, the right of self-determination and respect for human rights wherever man may live.

(Mr. Sahloul, Sudan)

At the beginning of this session, we must pause and consider what happened at the last session, namely, the tendencies that prevailed in that session and the effects they had on the deliberations that took place in the General Assembly, its Main Committees and subsidiary bodies.

We believe that the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly was one of the most important in the history of this Organization. That session witnessed the postulation, for the first time, of the so-called new world order. This, in our view, means the radical reconsideration of the relationships that used to prevail in the world on all the strategic, military, economic, social and human levels. In other words, this menas that the international community is at the threshold of a new phase in the history of humanity in the course of which many of the concepts that used to prevail in the past will be changed. We do hope that that change will be positive and imbued with lofty humanist ideals like the prevalence of justice for all, the application of one standard to all, and the preservation of the human dignity of all peoples, by allowing them to exercise their right to self-determination and refraining from interfering in their internal affairs. Above all, this Organization should be enabled to play a constructive and positive role and should not be used as a mount to achieve the narrow interests of any one nation or group of nations and should not be driven away from its principles and objectives which ensure justice for all.

The establishment of a new world order should not be the exclusive prerogative of the developed and militarily strong countries. It is a major transformation in which every nation should take part, in the interest of the small countries. The destiny of the world should not be shaped by an elite group of States which enjoy having great economic, industrial, technical and

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military power. We should not revert to the days of old colonialism, no matter how it may change its skin, or its techniques in imposing its influence on others. In the contemporary concept, we are all partners that bear a shared duty and a common responsibility to enable future generations to lead a decent life and to enjoy the fruits of human creativity and the blessings of an advanced civilization, whose goal is the happiness of mankind and not its continued material and spiritual wretchedness.

On the basis of the foregoing we call for enlarging the permanent membership of the Security Council, with members of the non-aligned countries being given a place by rotation. In that way, this important group of nations will be able to take part in the preparation of resolutions which have a bearing on international peace and security. We call for this as we are convinced that the Non-Aligned Movement has become more important to its members than ever before in view of the rapid changes that are sweeping over the world these days and the talk in international forums regarding the emergence of a new world order that does not seem to pay sufficient attention to the interests of the small countries.

In this respect, we cannot but express the hope that, this time, the post of Secretary-General will be given to one of the sons of Africa. This would demonstrate the international community's respect for and confidence in the African continent and its devoted sons, many of whom have exerted great efforts towards preserving international peace and security.

We hope that this session will be inspired by this constructive spirit in pursuing its work and shouldering its responsibilities. This would emphasize the partnership of the entire international community as a whole in shaping a better future for future generations. We hope that this session will thus

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enhance the importance of the United Nations and make it the main fulcrum that shapes the destiny of the world.

A few months ago, Sudan celebrated the second anniversary of its National Salvation Revolution. In those two years, Sudan has witnessed radical transformations which have helped the country to break out from the sphere of the old power-hungry forces and their strife. The revolution continues its determined march towards building a new society, enhancing national unity, and expanding and stabilizing the democratic process through consultation and dialogue. The revolution is moving resolutely towards power sharing and wealth distribution after the application of the federal system to the provinces. We hope very soon to establish the constituent national congress. We have already made adequate preparations for that congress and have organized a conference in which all parties participated in order to eliminate the problems that were left behind by previous regimes. These problems will be dealt with on a sound basis.

The overriding concern of our revolution is to bring about peace to all parts of the country. My country has witnessed an armed conflict that was imposed on it after it gained its independence in 1956.

(Mr. Sahloul, Sudan)

Therefore, the revolution, from day one, made a point of establishing contact and is still in contact with the rebel leaders. At present, we maintain high-level contacts through the good offices of Mr. Ibrahim Babangida, the President of the Republic of Nigeria, in his capacity as the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), with the aim of ironing out the differences between fellow countrymen in a spirit of African fellowship.

While thanking Mr. Babangida from this rostrum, we wish him every success in his good offices. We also call upon the rebel leaders to heed the voice of reason and the mother country and desist from being tools in the hands of foreign Powers so as to spare the people of Sudan and further suffering. We should work hand in hand to develop every part of the country and ensure its progress on the economic, social and human levels.

The central Government in Khartoum is quite prepared, at all times, to negotiate in good faith and put an end to this conflict which has bled the country for long enough. The only way to do this is to adhere to the spirit of the Conference of National Dialogue on Peace Issues, which convened in Khartoum in September of 1989.

Here we should point out that the recent developments in Ethiopia have led to positive tendencies which must reflect favourably on the prospects of peace in Sudan, and bring it nearer than ever before. However, this can only happen through concerted efforts and sincere intentions.

This year has witnessed rapid, dramatic international and regional changes which have amazed many and put paid to many of the theories and strategies which prevailed in the past. As I said before, we are now at the threshold of a new era in the history of the world.

(Mr. Sahloul, Sudan)

In the Arab region, there has been the Iraqi-Kuwaiti dispute and the resultant war that devastated the resources and capatilities of two sister States. This war opened wide the doors of the region to foreign intervention and paved the way for ushering in the so-called new world order, which we hope will not be applied selectively to certain peoples and Governments while others are left outside the realm of international laws and norms which they flout continuously. Indeed, we cannot understand why the new world order should mean, for example, the continued imposition of sanctions against Iraq, and the consequent continued deprivation of its people, its children, women and elderly citizens, of food and medicine. We cannot understand how a new world order could be ushered in through the total distruction of Iraq's infrastructures and the prevention of that country from enjoying its national wealth through a system of unfair and harsh control.

In the Horn of Africa, many developments have taken place and resulted in the uprooting of obsolete tribal regimes that had sold out to foreign Powers and betrayed the aspirations of their own peoples. Those major developments, which shook the region, were bound to have certain negative effects: such as the refugee problem, widespread suffering and the displacement of populations. However, these phenomena should not last forever.

From this rostrum, we congratulate the Ethiopian people on their admirable national achievement and assure them that we will always extend a helping hand in their march towards attaining their aspirations.

As for the developments in Somalia, we hastened, in cooperation with other sister States to do all we could to end the dispute there, in order to enable the Somali people to preserve their national identity and territorial integrity without leaving a loophole for any harmful foreign interference. We

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are fully confident that the people of the sister country of Somalia will be able to solve their own problems with wisdom and solidarity.

Given our keen interest in preserving the security of the region and ensuring the welfare of its peoples, we are intent on encouraging and enhancing dialogue between the countries of the region through regional and bilateral channels in order to improve the chances of peace and make optimum use of our material and human resources. The cancellation of visa requirements between Ethiopia and Sudan was meant to intensify exchanges for the mutual benefit of both countries.

The ongoing developments in Central and Eastern Europe are conclusive proof that peoples' aspirations and their desire to safeguard their traditions and human values should be respected. Such aspirations cannot be supressed by the force of arms or by subjugation to theories and regimes that are dictated from the top and which are divorced from reality. Freedom is not divisible and people's capabilities should not be wasted in running after slogans that are divorced from human nature.

We sincerely hope that the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe will be able to solve their pending problems, through constructive dialogue, and preserve their economic, social and human achievements. We also hope that that region will remain, as ever, a safety valve that preserves international peace and security and the champion and friend of the small and developing countries that aspire to achieve their economic and social development without any unfair diktat, domination or spheres of influence.

In the same vein, we hope that the people of South Africa will realize all their aspirations after political equality and social and economic justice. Therefore, we still adhere to the Declaration on Apartheid and its Destructive Consequences in Southern Africa (resolution S-16/1) of 1989, and

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call for its full implementation together with its programme of action, in order to end apartheid.

Consequently, we believe that the lifting of all sanctions and boycotts against the Government of South Africa should be reviewed and dealt with cautiously, despite the promises made by the Government of South Africa and the steps taken by that Government towards the abrogation of apartheid laws. In the end, we hope to see the black and coloured people of South Africa enjoying all the privileges enjoyed in that part of the African continent.

Mention should be made here of the importance of the tripartite agreement signed recently between the leaders of the African National Congress, the Inkatha Movement and the Government of South Africa in order to end the violence in that part of the continent.

We have spoken about the right of peoples to self-determination and their right to preserve their heritage and human achievements. This leads us to the tragedy of the age, namely, the tragedy of the Palestinian people, who have been dispossessed and driven out of their lands and subjected to all kinds of repression and brutality by the occupying Power, Israel.

The question of Palestine has been and still is a severe test for the international community and the credibility of its organizations. For more than 40 years the Palestinian people have been subjected to the most brutal forms of occupation and oppression. Every single day, their human rights are being violated by the Zionist regime.

Furthermore, the Israeli tax policy imposed on the occupied Arab territories, since 1967, is contrary to all international laws and conventions both in its assessment and methods of collection. That tax system is one of the harshest measures of collective punishment. Its measures are decreed by the military authorities. They are based on exaggerated arbitrary assessments

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of tax liabilities and are implemented under the guise of a tax-collection system that is enforced, most aggressively and arbitrarily, by the army, security forces, customs authorities and military courts.

It is evident that the escalation of this type of repression through taxation is a further attempt by the authorities of occupation to blackmail the Palestinians, to wear them down, weaken their ability to make savings, deprive them of the means of livelihood and pre-empt any possibility of their building an independent national economy. It is also meant to tighten the noose further with the aim of breaking the spirit of their intifadah and forcing them to surrender or leave the country.

(Mr. Sahloul, Sudan)

Despite all this, the Palestinian people have shown great courage and heroism. The children of the intifadah are still being martyred daily.

Peace and security will not be brought to the Middle East unless and until Israel withdraws from the occupied Arab territories, and unless and until the Palestinians achieve their full and undiminished rights, the foremost of which is the establishment of their own national State, under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Meanwhile, the PLO has continued to adopt a positive and constructive stand from which it took many a positive and constructive initiative with the aim of achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the area.

Despite all this, the entire international community can testify to the obduracy of Israel in continuing its occupation of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, the Syrian Golan and southern Lebanon. Israel continues to bring in tens of thousands of Soviet Jewish immigrants and continues to build settlements in the occupied territories. It continues to obstruct by every means the convening of the peace conference. It does so by imposing preconditions, preventing the Palestinians from taking their rightful place in the peace process and marginalizing the role of the United Nations, in naked defiance of international legality.

We strongly support all the sincere efforts being made to convene an international peace conference on the Middle East to be held on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and from this rostrum we call upon the permanent members of the Security Council to force Israel to come to the negotiating table without arrogance or prevarication.

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Right must be upheld. Just as the international community implemented fully every single resolution adopted by the Security Council in the context of the new world order, we look forward to the same zeal in applying the same standards in the case of Israel which has uprooted the Palestinian people, usurped their land and violated every international norm and law.

Shall we keep silent forever? Shall we close our eyes forever? How long will favouritism continue at the expense of others? From this rostrum, we support the latest resolutions adopted by the PLO in Algeria. We do hope that the United States of America, the Soviet Union and all the other interested countries will be able to make a success of the forthcoming peace conference, and thereby restore the full rights of the Palestinian people and neighbouring Arab countries and re-establish peace, stability and security in the region.

Other international and regional issues are still in abeyance. The situation in Afghanistan is still unsettled. We still hope for a broad-based Government and for the noble Mujahideen to unite, frustrate all foreign conspiracies and thereby enable the Afghani people to choose freely the political and social system they wish to live under.

In Cambodia, we hope that the spirit of Jakarta will prevail and enable the Supreme National Council, headed by Prince Sihanouk, with the help of the United Nations, to bring about a lasting and comprehensive political settlement.

My country takes great interest in the problem of the environment, in view of its close links with development. We wish to voice our deep concern at the deterioration of the environment in many areas. We refer especially to the depletion of the ozone layer, the unsettled climatic conditions which prevail in the world, drought, desertification, other natural disasters, the

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poisons released into the atmosphere by certain industries in some developed countries and the resultant damage to agriculture and development. We pin great hopes on the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development scheduled to take place in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. We hope the Conference will achieve concrete results that would lead to the preservation of the environment and indeed of human life. We in Sudan have established a national committee to prepare for the conference and to participate effectively in its deliberations.

At the economic level, the deterioration of the economies of the African continent has reached a critical stage. The important changes that have taken place in international relations have not led to a parallel détente in international economic relations. We know that the poor countries still suffer from their usual problems of indebtedness, adverse trade conditions and sluggish economic development. Africa has suffered one natural disaster after the other over the past few years. Those continuing national disasters have led to a severe plunge in its export revenues at a time when the continent stands in dire need of the resources required to finance imports whose prices have been inflated. Unless and until the terms of trade improve in a fair and equitable manner, the economic situation of the African countries will deteriorate further as most of them have to earmark about 90 per cent of their export earnings to finance the importation of absolute necessities at the expense of their ability to invest in development projects.

The debt burden has plagued both developing and developed countries alike, and has had a very negative effect on the development efforts of the developing countries. Foreign debts continue to swallow up most or even all of the revenues of those countries in many cases. Five years have passed

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since the United Nations adopted the Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development.

We now notice that the African countries have adopted the required policies and taken the necessary measures to make structural changes, despite the heavy social and political cost involved. However, the requirements of economic reform are not confined to austerity measures and structural reforms. It also requires financial inflows that measure up to the size of the problem.

My delegation is in complete agreement with the final review and appraisal of the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development. Following the failure of the said programme, we call for the acoption of the proposal with regard to the implementation of the international agenda on cooperation with Africa in the 1990s. We also hope the current negotiations in Uruguay will succeed.

The Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries was held last year in an atmosphere of understanding and resolve to cooperate with those countries and assist them in overcoming their economic troubles through the implementation of the programme for revitalizing their economic development. The programme is based on a sound and comprehensive scientific understanding of the problems involved. All parties should be committed to participate in its implementation.

My delegation wishes to commend the Paris Declaration and calls upon on the least developed countries, the international community and the secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to play their full and positive roles in the implementation of the programme of action on the basis of shared responsibility and the consensus reached at that Conference.

(Mr. Sahloul, Sudan)

My delegation would like to commend the programme for special economic and disaster relief assistance. The United Nations has contributed, through the assistance given by the donor countries and various organizations, in relief operations. In Sudan, the international community, as represented by the donor countries and organizations, has continued to play its humanitarian role in relief operations in some parts of the country, as well as for those who were uprooted and forced to leave their homes. In this respect, I can only hail the resolution adopted by the General Assembly in its last session with regard to the third phase of Operation Lifeline Sudan.

Mention should be made also of the visit to Khartoum by Mr. James Ingram, Executive Director of the World Food Programme and of the subsequent visits to Khartoum and Nairobi by Mr. James Jonah, Under-Secretary-General, Department for Special Political Questions. The purpose of those visits was to provide foodstuffs to the area of Al-Nasser and the Sudanese nationals who had returned to it after the collapse of the Mengistu regime in Ethiopia.

The Government of Sudan has shown its readiness to enable the World Food Programme, international and non-governmental organizations and donor countries to provide that aid on humanitarian grounds, despite the fact that most of those returnees still carry arms against the State of Sudan.

The rebel movement still holds tens of thousands of children in camps with a view to training them to carry and use arms and uses them in transporting munitions and matériel in complete disregard of the repeated appeals by the international community. We must point out here the dangerous nature of such practices which should be unmasked so that the international community may be made aware of the acts perpetrated by that rebel movement.

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The Government of Sudan has expressed its willingness to assist in the relief operations and agreed to United Nations proposals on phase three of Operation Lifeline Sudan. Up to the present and regardless of the non-compliance of the other party, the Government of Sudan, given its responsibility towards its people, has responded, now as in the past, and met all the requirements for the successful implementation of that important humanitarian programme. This will continue to be its policy.

While we welcome the report on the United Nations programme on emergency assistance in the Horn of Africa and commend the implementation of part of that programme, we call upon the donor countries and organizations to continue to finance the programme for the present and the coming year.

We must reiterate here the readiness of the Government of Sudan to discuss all questions of emergency relief with all the Governments concerned, but without compromising the sovereignty of our country which has always cooperated in showing respect for the dignity of the people of the Sudan. In this context, I must refer to the statement of the Foreign Minister of the Netherlands, who spoke on behalf of the European Economic Community, in which he expressed concern about the economic and the human rights situation in Sudan. I would refer in this respect to what I have already said a few moments ago, namely that the Government of Sudan is eager to allow relief to reach all those who need it throughout Sudan. This is a fact that the United Nations officials attest to and it proves that what was said in the statement by the Foreign Minister of the Netherlands was without foundation and not supported by factual evidence.

As for the comments by the representative of the United Kingdom at the pledging conference for the Horn of Africa, specifically with respect to the Darfur area, I wish to state that the food situation there is good; it is

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just that the area lacks an adequate transportation network. We would refer in this respect to the huge project of rehabilitating the railroad sector under International Monetary Fund auspices which could have been carried out were it not for the obstacles that some of the donor countries continued to put in its way even after the contracts were signed. The same type of obstruction has impeded our efforts in the area of agricultural inputs. Notwithstanding, the allegation that half of Sudan's population will starve is not to be believed; it is groundless. I am pleased to say that such over-pessimistic predictions will not come true and are without basis. The people of Sudan are alive and well.

We also wish to point out that some of the donor countries whose voices have been the loudest in criticizing us are those who have donated least: their donations which do not exceed a thousand tons of food have not reached us to this date.

There are many other human and social issues of great importance which continue to be in abeyance and which call for lasting stable solutions. One of such issues is the question of political asylum, a negative phenomenon which has been before us since the Second World War and the hotbeds of tension and political and military conflict that that war spawned in many of the countries of the developing world. If certain political, economic, social and climatic circumstances have contributed in the past to the intensification of the phenomenon in Africa, recent developments in the Horn of Africa have caused huge numbers of refugees to flee to neighbouring countries. Sudan has had a large share of that tragedy. We have received tens of thousands of our brethren from Ethiopia. Despite our limited resources and despite the fact that we are accommodating tens of thousands of refugees, we have spared no effort to give them refuge. We have entered into an agreement with Ethiopia

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and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on accommodating those refugees, which proves our good intentions with respect to permanent cooperation with all our neighbours.

That agreement is a sign of the importance we attach to humanitarian cooperation in several fields. We wish to thank the Government of Ethiopia, the UNHCR and all the States and economic groupings that have contributed to the success of this humanitarian effort. The status of refugee is a blot on the dignity of man, and is an anachronism in an age when we have achieved great progress in other areas. We hope that Mrs. Sadako Ogata, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, will visit the Sudan to see first-hand the situation there rather than depending for information on certain donor countries and non-governmental organizations. That would block the way in the face of the current attempts at justifying interference in the internal affairs of sovereign States under the pretext of protecting human rights.

Human rights, the right to live in peace and security and enjoy unhampered economic, social and cultural progress, should be among and no less than any of the major questions on the international agenda, such as the questions of disarmament, the granting of independence to colonized countries, technology transfers and the establishment of an equitable international economic order. The best resource on Earth is man; man is God's guardian of the planet. Because of economic, strategic and social circumstances, millions suffer from starvation and ignorance and are prevented from exercising the right to self-determination. Many people cannot lead a decent life or practice their religion because of policies imposed upon them.

Things that may be valid for one society do not necessarily apply in the case of another; every system of thought and value should spring from the society itself. It should not be imposed from outside. Sudan has been

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accused of certain human rights violations; we want to make the truth known. We have established positive relations with the Commission on Human Rights and reported to it fully on the human rights situation in Sudan. Though we believe that the decision reached by the Commission is neither fair nor objective we shall cooperate with it as we have nothing to hide. We are committed to all human rights conventions to which we are signatories.

How can Sudan be accused of human rights violations when we have in fact brought dignity to the people of Sudan? We have applied the law, and have created circumstances favourable to the application of the rule of law. We have released all political detainees and have demolished the largest of detention camps, that which the colonial power built in the heyday of empire.

We ask all our critics to hear us out, to listen to the testimony of parliamentarians and representatives of humanitarian groups and to be willing to see the facts. We are proud that for the first time in the history of armed conflict we applied the concept of the right of safe passage with a view to saving many lives. The world can also see that we contributed food and medicine to the victims of torture who have fled to Sudan after the recent developments in Ethopia, even though most of them were up in arms against the country. Their own country.

The application of Islamic shariah in the Sudan does not deprive non-Muslims of their rights. Nor does it compromise the dignity of non-Muslims or prevent them frcm enjoying all their human rights. The application of the shariah system enables everyone to enjoy his rights and submit to the will of God.

At this very important juncture in human and world history, we express our conviction that the new world order should be based on justice, non-interference and respect for self-determination.

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This system should be the means to preserve the dignity of man and it should be done through the international Organization because it is universal and the only body capable of preserving international peace and security. We will spare no effort in upholding this system which we await impatiently.

Mr. SIMUTIS (Lithuania): On behalf of the free people and the Government of Lithuania, I extend to Mr. Samir Shihabi sincere congratulations on his election to the office of President of the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session and I hope that his work will be crowned with success. I also take this opportunity to congratulate the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, on his efforts at enhancing the role and prestige of the United Nations and his contribution in promoting world peace and understanding among nations.

Lithuania also wishes to express its gratitude to the many Governments that have helped us to make our way back to independence an easier one. In our country's time of greatest need, there were Governments that stood with our people as they sought to regain their rightful place in the international community. In particular, I would like to recognize the friendly hand extended to us by the peoples of Iceland and our other Nordic neighbours. In my country they shall for ever be remembered for their courage and perseverance on our behalf.

The people of Lithuania join with the peoples of Estonia and Latvia in rejoicing on their admission to this world body. Two years ago, we linked hands with our Baltic brothers and sisters in a human chain stretching 600 kilometres from Vilnius to Riga to Tallinn. On that day the people of our

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three countries knew in their hearts that the trust forged in hardship among us would lead us out of bondage together. While we are admitted to the United Nations as three, we celebrate as one.

I have been assigned by my Government to speak for a country that has just emerged from the dark night of oppression, blinded at first by the sudden light of freedom. Our people are elated and happy to join the family of sovereign nations. We are well aware that the first steps will be difficult, but we are happy to have this opportunity to show that a free people can achieve moral and material well-being even under the most adverse conditions.

Lithuania is a centuries-old nation that has always endeavoured to live at peace in a region of the world often fought over by our larger neighbours. Situated at a European crossroads, the Lithuanian people established their own State in the thirteenth century. King Gediminas, who in the fourteenth century reigned over a land that was home to Lithuanians, Byelorussians, Ukrainians, Jews and other nationalities, promoted the principles of tolerance and mutual respect among citizens. For the next five centuries, the descendants of Gediminas would foster and build upon these proud traditions, making them the cornerstone of the Lithuanian State.

While Lithuania eventually fell victim to the expansionist policies of its larger neighbours and in the late eighteenth century was partitioned between them, its people continued to strive for independence, never submitting to ruthless attempts to destroy their treasured traditions. With national awakening sweeping the captive nations of Eastern Europe, Lithuania was reborn on 16 February 1918, after 123 years of foreign rule. The Republic of Lithuania was proclaimed a democratic and independent State, and the enlightened founding fathers drew strength from the traditions of the previous

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Lithuanian State in fostering tolerance between religions and respect for the cultural identity of national minorities.

Lithuania was a full-fledged and active member of the League of Nations. The Republic of Lithuania provided shelter and security for its people and established cultural, economic, and political ties with nations around the world. Peoples of all nationalities, offered the chance to live in peace and prosperity in the Republic of Lithuania, nurtured their cultures and traditions.

Yet, in 1940, all of this was swept away with the stroke of a pen. One year earlier the fate of the peoples of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia was decided in secret by two brutal dictators who represented two ruthless totalitarian systems. One year later, with Europe in the chaos of war, these three countries were quickly and silently erased from the world map. Hundreds of thousands of innocent human beings were lost to Nazi and Stalinist terror, and the hands of the clock of progress stopped.

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In the years that followed, our people vigorously resisted foreign rule. For nine years after the Second World War a guerrilla war raged in Lithuania's forests while Lithuanian freedom fighters were sacrificing their lives to resist foreign occupation of our country. After the guerrilla war the Lithuanian people engaged in a protracted non-violent struggle to preserve their national identity. While they were forced to bury history books and hide any remembrance of our independent past, parents never stopped quietly telling their children of more joyous days, and these children would tell their children.

And around the world Lithuanians, forced to leave their homeland for fear of deportation and imprisonment, ceaselessly laboured to prevent the complete disappearance of our nation's name from modern memory. Western democracies refused to recognize the illegal incorporation of the Baltic States into the Soviet Union and kept alive our hope that the day would soon come when Lithuania would return to the world.

In 1988 Lithuania was again reborn. In one fateful summer, in the shadow of thousands of Lithuanian flags, we found our voice, and sang, arm in arm, as tanks rolled by us. We raised no hand, and fired no bullets, for all of us knew to be true the words expressed in a poem by the Lithuanian poet Maironis written decades earlier during the first Lithuanian rebirth:

"You cannot stop the flow of the river,

"You cannot halt the new rebirth".

On 11 March 1990 the freely elected Supreme Council proclaimed the restoration of Lithuania's independence, and during the plebiscite on 9 February this year the people overwhelmingly confirmed that Lithuania is, and shall remain, an independent, democratic Republic. We wish to express our sincere appreciation to observers from many countries who came to Lithuania

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and were able to report on the validity of the elections to the Supreme Council and on the plebiscite on independence.

Less than 10 months ago, on 13 January, peaceful and unarmed Lithuanian civilians defended their liberty and their legitimate Government by gathering in their thousands outside the Parliament building and pledging never to retreat. That night, as the words of Lithuanian folk songs sung around bonfires drowned out the thunder of Soviet tank fire, peaceful resistance triumphed, but not without tragic loss. Before the smoke cleared the next morning and the Soviet attempt to overthrow our democratically elected Government had failed, 13 of Lithuania's bravest men and women had died and hundreds more had been injured in the name of our independence.

Our people's devotion to liberty and their peaceful efforts to defend their freedom have already proved a model to other nations. The disintegration of Soviet Communist power started in the occupied Baltic nations, since they were the first nations ruled by the Soviet Union to dare to protest openly and then to rebel against an oppressive, ruthless and arrogant totalitarian regime. Two months ago the spirit of peaceful but resolute resistance to dictatorship manifested itself in Moscow, as Russians defended their Parliament and the future of democracy. The message was the same: the thirst for freedom will conquer all obstacles.

But freedom is never easy, and it will not be so for us. We are all well aware of the difficulties confronting us. Our national economy is entering an intense period of reconstruction and reorganization after years of central planning and neglect. My Government is committed to providing its people with the security and prosperity only a free market can provide. Yet privatization, price reform, introduction of our own convertible currency,

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reorientation of industry and the establishment of a sound environment for the conduct of free trade require great patience. As the experience of other Eastern European countries has shown, the transition from a command to a market economy is impossible without the support and active assistance of developed nations. Therefore, Lithuania looks forward to the advice and assistance of the United Nations family of agencies.

As our world grows smaller and our awareness of our collective responsibility for its future increases, our efforts to protect what is truly one country, our planet, must be intensified. Lithuania now endures the terrible consequences of careless development and disregard for the environment. Pollution levels and waste residue are reaching alarming levels in my country. In recent years various pollutants have tainted our dairy and farm products. And not a hundred miles from Lithuania's capital there stands a monument to the utter disregard of previous Governments for human safety - the Ignalina nuclear power station. While the plant supplements energy supplies for a large portion of the Baltic region, safety considerations and waste disposal have not been given the attention they demand. It is my hope that the lessons we are now learning as a result of the tragic consequences of the Chernobyl catastrophe, which also greatly affected my country, will underscore the frailty of our common home and encourage us to seek universal guidelines for environmental protection.

Our country has over the past year been actively engaged in regional discussions on the clean-up of the Baltic Sea. Like many similar efforts taking place in other areas of the world, these multilateral consultations now lay the groundwork for an increase in coordinated efforts by the international community as a whole.

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We are hopeful that the world economy and environment issues will improve through constructive dialogue within the framework of the United Nations system. We look forward to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, scheduled to be held in Brazil in June next year, aimed at laying the groundwork for international accord and cooperation on these pivotal issues.

Many who have addressed the Assembly before me have pointed to the new and truly wonderful opportunity offered the world community to bring a swift and lasting end to global tensions. In recent years the long-awaited chance for peace has come to regions previously suffering from constant conflict. We hope that from the Middle East to Asia, Central America and, yes, the Baltic States, nations will soon be free from the threat of violence and will be able, many for the first time in their modern history, to address pressing economic, environmental and social concerns. We are for the peaceful, non-violent realization of the self-determination of nations, and in this regard Lithuania, which won its independence through peaceful means, subscribes fully to the provisions of the United Nations Charter calling for the settlement of disputes through dialogue and mutual understanding. Lithuania has no quarrels with any of its neighbours, wanting only to live in peace with all of them.

It is with this end in mind that my Government has called for the removal of all Soviet troops from our soil. Their presence in Lithuania is utterly illegal; it is not based on any treaty or agreement and Lithuania's Government refuses to agree to their continued presence in our country. With the withdrawal of these armed forces not only will Lithuania be free to strengthen the institutions of its new democracy, but the soldiers, so long the

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instruments of faceless generals miles away, may return to their homes and participate in the historic opportunity to rebuild their nations devastated by 70 years of neglect.

Lithuania is very much concerned about the danger of proliferation of nuclear armaments in the world. We welcome the proposals for a large-scale reduction of nuclear arms put forward by the President of the United States and the President of the Soviet Union. However, we are worried about the spread of such armaments to many other countries. The Supreme Council of the Republic of Lithuania has already voted to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Lithuania does not have any such armaments and refuses to acquire them in the future. Lithuania's Government hopes that the Soviet forces in Lithuania have no nuclear weapons in their possession. Should that not be the case, Lithuania demands their immediate removal from its territory. Furthermore, Lithuania actively supports the establishment of a nuclear-arms-free zone extending from the Nordic countries in the north to the Black Sea in the south.

I should now like to turn to a subject held most dear by the people of Lithuania: human rights. Lithuania has welcomed and will continue to welcome the internationalization of human-rights monitoring. The rights of men, women and children transcend all boundaries. Lithuania is building a multiparty, democratic State which will protect the rights and freedoms of all its citizens. Lithuania's laws protect the cultural rights of all national minorities with the aim of enriching our country's cultural heritage.

Lithuania adds its voice to the many voices calling for greater international coordination in responding to crises around the globe. As a nation which has sought the understanding, and through this the support, of

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the international community for its goals, we fully appreciate the need for swift response to prevent the aggravation of conflicts that threaten international peace.

The idea of a new world order, of which so many have spoken, is an idea that gives real hope to nations and peoples tired of old tyrannies and distrustful of old rhetoric. It is the hope of my Government that this order will be based, not as past orders have been, on power politics, but on respect for human rights, dignity and self-determination.

As President Landsbergis told this Assembly only last month, Lithuania wishes to see the old cynicism connected with politics rejected and hopes to see substituted for it a faith in progress based on higher values and on respect for individual human dignity. As Mr. Landsbergis stated:

> "if one person can lead a moral life, why cannot moral politics govern the world? If one can speak the truth, why cannot open truth govern politics?" (A/46/PV.1, pp. 82-83)

In closing, I should like to express once again our country's joy at the warm welcome we have received from this world body and people everywhere. We eagerly await the opportunity to join in the establishment of a secure future for all our children and look forward to many years of constructive cooperation in the United Nations, on which the hopes of humanity for a peaceful and just world order are based.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): One representative wishes to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

May I remind members that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five for the second, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

I call on the representative of France.

Mr. MENAT (France) (interpretation from French): In his statement, the head of the delegation of the Solomon Islands called into question my country, in particular for the nuclear tests being carried out in French Polynesia. My delegation wishes to recall that the tests being conducted by France on its territory in no way affect the interests of the region's States, the health of the people living there or the environment. This has been amply demonstrated by on-site studies carried out by several national and international commissions and, in particular, by the results of a study carried out during a mission in March 1991 by several laboratories, including one from the International Atomic Energy Agency. Lastly, France is following a very broad-based information policy regarding its nuclear tests, a policy it intends to pursue while moving away from any polemics.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.